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Subject: [NACWA Security Cmte] Chlorine Gas Article & Interactive Map

NACWA Security & Emergency Preparedness Committee:

The Center for Effective Government has published an article regarding facilities that store large amounts of chlorine gas, including wastewater treatment facilities. The article includes an interactive map that shows the location of these facilities, their names, and the number of accidents involving chlorine gas. Links are also provided for more detailed information about each facility as contained in EPA's Risk Management Plan (RMP) database.

The article states that "In the past 15 years, over 600 accidents injuring almost 800 people have occurred at these facilities. However, safer alternatives are available, and many facilities have already turned to them, showing that these alternatives can be commercially successful." The goal of the Center for Effective Government is for the federal government to require chlorine gas alternatives to be used. The position that NACWA and its fellow water sector associations advance is that water and wastewater utilities must have the ability to make their own choices about disinfection methods.

Although it is disappointing to see all of this information about facilities using chlorine gas compiled in one interactive map, the non-Off-Site Consequence Analysis (non-OCA) sections of the RMP database are not restricted. NACWA signed a letter last year with other water sector associations requesting that EPA keep non-Off-Site Consequence Analysis (non-OCA) sections of the RMP database off of the internet. EPA complied with this request and non-OCA information is only available in Agency reading rooms or through Freedom of Information Act requests.

NACWA members using chlorine gas should be aware of this article – and the interactive map – and, as always, have appropriate security measures in place to protect their stores of chlorine gas. We will continue to monitor the efforts of organizations that want to ban use of chlorine gas, and we'll work with the other water sector associations on responses when needed. If you have concerns about this article or related issues, please call or email me.

Thank you,
Cynthia

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